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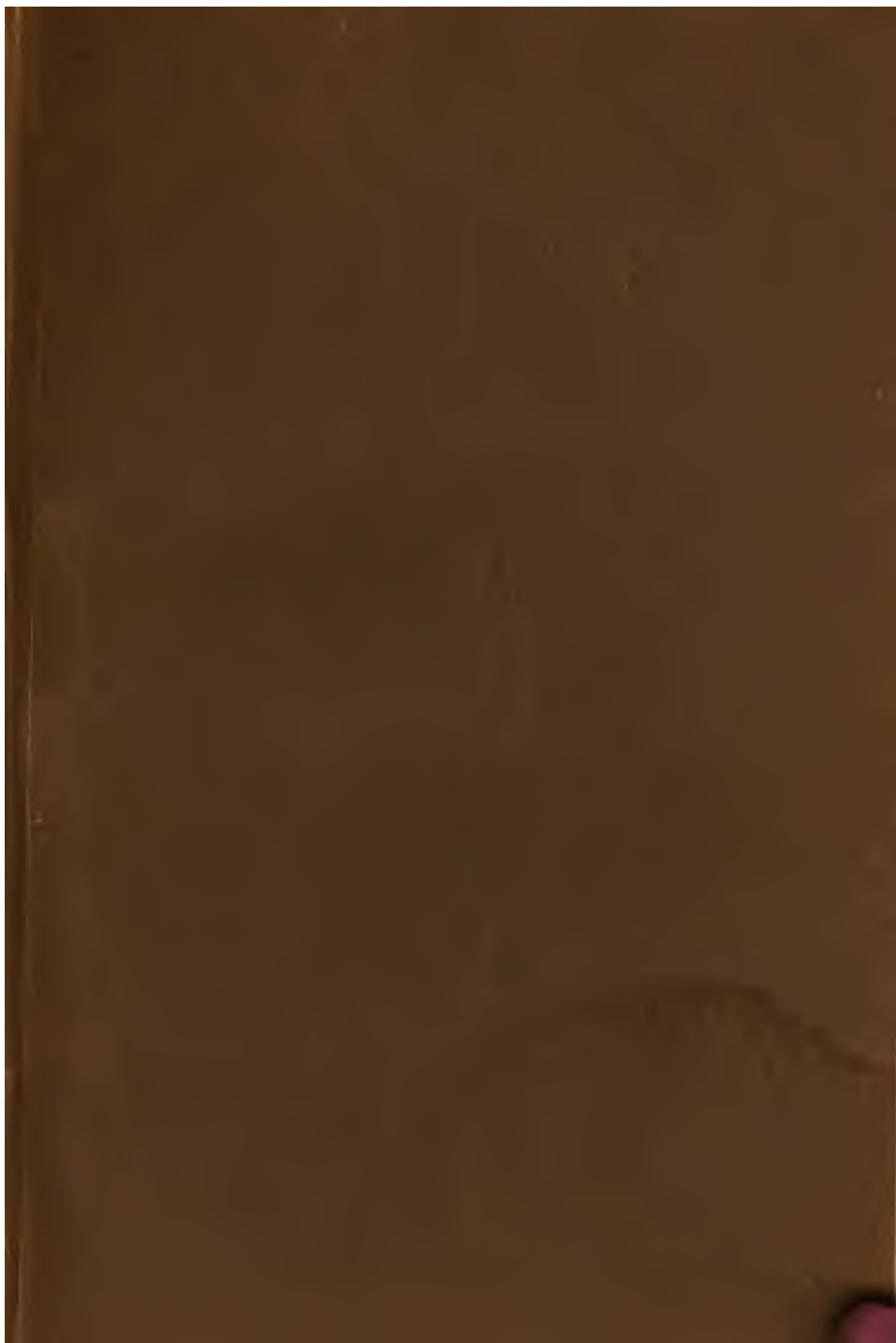
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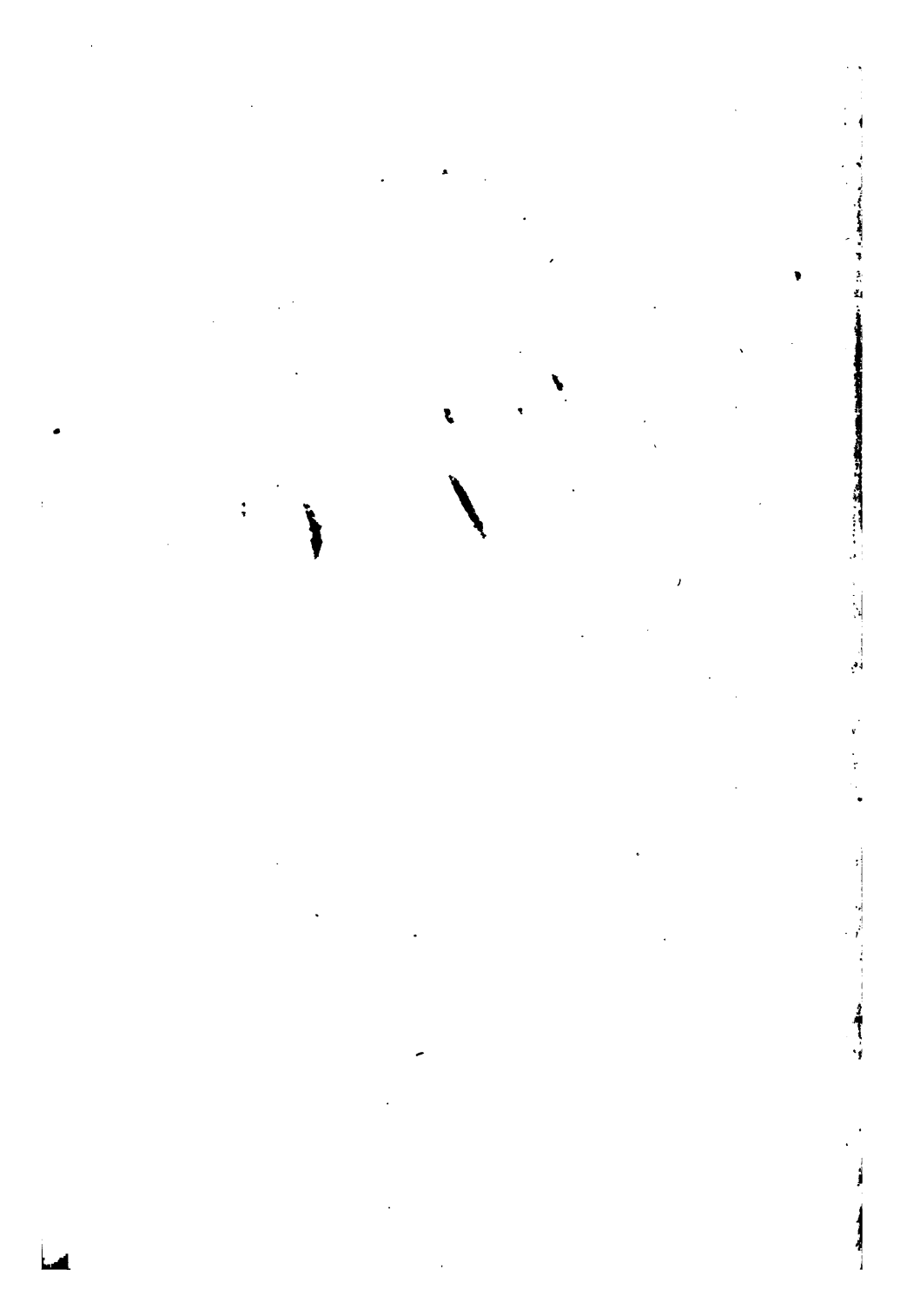


1. Navasink river — Poetry
2. Poetry, American  
1/20

To  
Miss  
Annie Q. Gemmill  
with the respects of  
J. W. Friend.  
P. DuBois.

NB1

Du Bois



THE  
MOUNTAINEER OF THE NEVERSINK:

A POEM IN FOUR CANTOS.

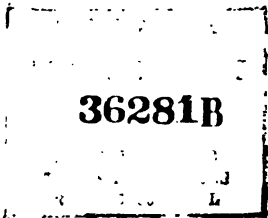
BY  
PATTERSON DUBOIS.

LC  
"To these emotions whencesoe'er they come,  
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,  
Or from the soul—an impulse to herself—  
I would give utterance in numerous verse—  
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love and Hope,  
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;  
Of blessed consolations in distress."—WORDSWORTH.

"Yet was poetic impulse given,  
By the green hill and clear blue heaven."—SCOTT.

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1873.  
MRS



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## PREFACE.

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To preface a new book as "printed, not published," is to introduce it to those who will recognise themselves as within the limit of its designed circulation.

Yet, most of these—the Author's friends—ere they freely admit the new member, might justly demand of a Poem the password of its own history.

The study of the Beautiful in Nature develops an enthusiasm, which, ever aspiring, discerns in the Divine Expression alone, the true and vital attribute or Principle of Beauty.

This aspiration naturally courts sympathy; our higher impulses are but life itself, and to hide them is to oppose our very natures. By pen or pencil, we ever seek to strengthen our own emotions by exciting a reflex from the hearts and minds of others.

Naturally enough, these expressions have, in the following pages, found currency in a simple narrative. Starting, as it did, more than six years ago, and with a purpose scarcely more definite than diversion, the work has proven its own

reward; more, however, as a thing then progressive than as now a thing accomplished.

It is not without some misgivings that the pleasures of farther amending must cease, and (in compliance with request) the work, though it prove yet incomplete, be finally closed.

PATTERSON DUBOIS.

NOVEMBER, 1872.

CANTO I.

“ It was a barren scene, and wild,  
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled ;  
But, ever and anon, between  
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green.”—SCOTT.

“ All nature is but art, unknown to thee ;  
All chance, direction which thou canst not see ;  
All discord, harmony not understood ;  
All partial evil, universal good.”—POPE.

“ It is not ours to separate  
The tangled skein of will and fate,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
And between choice and Providence,  
Divide the circle of events.”—WHITTIER.

# The Mountaineer of the Neversink.

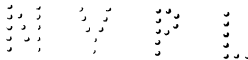
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## CANTO FIRST.

PARTWAY between the mountain caps of snow  
And verdant vales that wind and stretch below,  
Where Catskill's southward peaks begin to see  
Themselves eclipsed by Shawangunk's\* majesty ;  
'Tis there through miles of mountain waste we roam,  
To find by some lone stream a rustic home.

In such a home,—built staunch of logs and clay,  
That well could fend the frosty blasts away,  
Whose rooms, by fancy unadorned, and small,  
Proved 'twas a cosy little home for all ;—  
In such a home, one Waldo Wayne and wife  
Lived with three children bright—the homestead's life :  
A maid, the first, of robust mien and form,  
That well could brook a winter's ruthless storm,  
Whose comely features less a picture drew

\* Pronounced Shon-gum.



Of beauty than of nature well-to-do,  
 Whose lips confirmed the language of her looks,—  
 The inner light, that is not shed by books,—  
 For Nannie (such her name) found chances few  
 To learn the willing school-girl's "something new."  
 But Nannie, rising with the morning sun,  
 Not trained to court the name of idle one,  
 Improved the chance to get some housework done ;  
 The helping hand she lent, the will she gave  
 (And *giving* is high Heaven's way to save),  
 Self-needs thrust low, held others eminent,  
 To heal a wound or stitch a sorry rent ;  
 Allowed no morning reverie's caress,  
 No sweets of rest to bitter with excess,  
 Yet loving not the quiet hour less,  
 Drew recreation from a labor sweet,  
 That wakes the head, but rests the weary feet.

Adorned by cleanliness, the lone abode  
 Stood sentry-like, upon the mountain road,  
 That lined the hills, whose eager tops exchange  
 Long leers of rivalry with Shawangunk's range.  
 The cottage site, high o'er the vales that drink  
 Their freshness from the crystal Neversink,  
 Self-homage to the higher titles paid,  
 And sped the husbandman pursue his trade.



Oft, when the summer sun was sinking low,  
The family sauntered on the green plateau,  
To stretch on mossy rock or grassy swell,—  
Where hiding crickets chant the vespers well,—  
And idly resting o'er the deep ravine,  
Gaze by the glamour of the sunset scene.  
Yon amber light, commingling with the blue,  
Blends beauteously a scale of color through,  
Too subtle in its purity to trace  
The mood and manner of the first embrace,—  
That hides itself by love and myst'ry there,  
And bares a vap'rous plumage to the air.  
Sweet evening breeze ! the toiler's balm from God,  
The mountain's whisper to the lowland sod ;  
Life, LOVE—its principle of BEAUTY sends,  
To every blade a vital freshness lends,  
And draws a stud of brilliance where it bends.  
How boldly, where the timid vapors shift,  
The highland heads in darkling purple lift ;  
How graciously they deign to slope away,  
To melt and mingle in a chilly gray !  
How truly, yet insensibly, they leap  
In shadow-proxies on a farther steep,  
Half conscience-smitten, cautious, up they creep !  
Now, while the gen'rous stream—the Neversink—  
Reflects the glory that it ought to drink,

The lowlands dim, the dusky woodlands pale,  
And laggard mists come crawling up the vale,  
Up, where the shadows haste to overrun,  
Live crags leap forth to catch the setting sun !  
What great supernal flood of glory fills  
The royal council of the evening hills !  
And lo ! the king has sunk from yonder crest ;  
Another day has found its peaceful rest ;  
The mighty monarch's march again is done,  
And earth at last subdues the boasting sun.  
But see ! while from the earth he droops and dies,  
Life ! life ! again the dying monarch cries—  
Uplifts his golden quiver to the air,  
And flings a host of spreading arrows there :—  
Faith's messengers, the promise and the praise,  
In this, the halcyon hour of summer days !

Such was the summer eve. In winter's night,  
Alone, the family knew the keen delight  
Of banishing the sprite of loneliness,  
By circling round the hearth, aglow and bright,  
That seemed to lend their intercourse its dress.  
There, father, mother, brother, sisters, aye,  
And e'en the house-dog found his place to lie ;  
They list in wonder to the winds without,  
Wrap their lone cabin irefully about,



And sing weird, wild-tuned melodies, and moan,  
E'en making sturdy oaks bend low and groan ;  
Or, playing petty pranks, perhaps, may feign  
An elf, when tree-twigs scratch the window pane ;  
Then cause the sheltered mortals all to shrink,  
Till sudden, they perchance the reason think,—  
That noise without, some stranger entering late ;  
Or yet, more like, they hear the garden gate,  
Hung loose upon its rusty hinges old,  
Hard-rattled by rude Boreas—blowing cold !

Sometimes, when one the silence wished to break,  
Would story tell, or observation make ;  
The good wife Mary, thankful for her own  
Remembering that no life is shaped alone,  
With ardent trust that Waldo might receive  
Her words of truth, and hearing them, believe,—  
Speaks of their comforts, and how all should live  
To glorify that Father who did give  
A lasting shelter from the cold and storm,  
And blazing fire to comfort, cheer and warm :  
Though strange it seem that some abound in wealth,  
And some have never tasted aught but health ;  
While others, with a few hard crusts of bread  
From charity, but malady have fed ;  
Though strange it seem, yet stranger, and yet true

(For instances to prove are never few),  
*That everything—if sickness, or if health,  
 If woe of poverty, or ease of wealth,  
 Pursuits of peace, or horrors of the sword,  
 All things work good to them that love the Lord.*

Though Waldo ne'er reechoed this appeal—  
 Yet mem'ry stores the truth where none can steal,  
 While conscience waits the chance to play the part  
 Of dealing from the mem'ry to the heart.  
 And Mary talked as those whose garnered store  
 Is reaped from fields of cultivated lore,—  
 For surely something lies in Christian truth,  
 That lends a grace and power to lips uncouth,—  
 As where no human hand pretends to sow,  
 God's sweetest flowers on earth's crude bosom grow.

And so, in Mary's breast the fragrant tree  
 Bloomed now by Faith's unerring husbandry,  
 Perfumed the nether air with fruit and bud,  
 From seeds long planted by ancestral blood.  
 Long may that vein, with truth and honor red,  
 In future generations swell and flow,  
 As in her sires, two centuries ago,  
 It drew them from their fatherland, and led  
 Them through the Hudson, up to Shawangunk's head.

Still, to those vales new generations cling,—  
 Esopus, Wallkill, and the Warwarsing,  
 Fair Hudson's margin and old Shawangunk's walls,  
 Time neither crumbles, nor their beauty palls;—  
 I love to tread those great ancestral halls!

*We* love them, kinsmen; for our honored sire,

To whom we trace our proudest pedigree,  
 Escaped the Inquisition's rack and fire,—

A glorious one of that pure company  
 That sought their homes where savage footsteps trod  
 And made the wilderness a house of God.

*Still may we reverence our fathers' lot,*

*That forfeited their shield and coronet*

*For brighter blazons that we cherish yet,*

*The arms of Faith, the title—Huguenot!*

Now turns the father, restless, to his right,  
 To idly dally, by the fading light,  
 With Edgar there—a little boy of seven,—  
 In age the third (the second gone to Heaven);  
 He perched upon an easy chair, to reap  
 The pleasures of a child's untroubled sleep;  
 While Nannie, conscious now and then, of sound,  
 Calls dreamily her mother,—but 'tis found  
 Her mother's somewhat quaint and rustic seat  
 Stands vacant; for, with noiseless tread of feet,

The mother took her infant child away  
To slumber, as she hummed a roundelay.  
Ere late, the constant clock and fickle fire,  
Great Despots!—give the signals to retire ;  
And soon, obedient to the dumb command,  
Each finds a rest, and roams the mystic land.

An early stir within that rustic home,  
Before the rising sun, one winter's day,  
Had chased the twinkling lamps of heaven away,—  
Before the peaks, that towered high and bold,  
Received the glowing tints of red and gold,—  
Betokened some event ere long to come.  
An earlier breakfast than their custom there,  
The parents attired in their best of wear ;  
The gathering, too, of baskets, shawls and coats ;  
The little sack of summer's hay and oats—  
All purposed much ; but yet, presaging more,  
The horse and wagon waited by the door.  
Then, provident for future things unthought  
(As Waldo ever was), some extras brought,  
And stowed away upon the wagon floor,  
A lantern, leathern straps, and one thing more,  
A little basket, filled with luncheon good,  
But plain, as always was their daily food ;  
And then, in case of storm and greater cold,

A blanket shawl, well-worn, 'tis true, and old,  
But, like the rest of all things held as theirs,  
'Twas held for use till use no longer bears.  
Then came the parting time ; each parent smiled,  
And kissed full thrice or more their infant child,  
For each one of the other children, too,  
(Though short the purposed absence) fond adieu.  
Well sheltered, back upon the wagon seat,  
They kissed their hands good-bye to baby, sweet ;  
It stood within, and, held in Nannie's arms,  
Laughed loud its joys and cried its young alarms,  
Reached out its hand, and tried, but tried in vain,  
To shake good-bye beyond the window-pane.

All things were right, so wheeling round the bend,  
A down the steep decline their way they wend ;  
Brisk spirit, bracing air, the travelers woo,  
Bid homestead cheer and 'customed scenes adieu ;  
Hie near the narrow ledges, over stones,  
And o'er the fallen leaves of sombre tones,  
Away ! away ! nor fear the worst to come,  
Bleak winds may vainly shake the cabin home.

That morning's blush, that heralded the sun,  
Concealed its motor—'twas an hapless one !  
The bud of day, whose crimson dye we praise,

Its glory stifled in a sickly haze—  
Itself exhaled,—the offspring of the air ;  
And beauty was its own destroyer there.  
To know the shrouded sun, to time the day,  
Seemed 'most impossible ; for clouds of gray,  
First lightly mingling, clasped before the sky,  
Obscuring earth's majestic peaks on high  
In vapors dank, that lost their face and form—  
Sure token of a cold, tempestuous storm.  
Fair dawn, the brilliant color-guard of day,  
Her banner flung, then died before the fray !

The weather-wise are those whose prophecies  
Reverse and modulate with every breeze,  
Until the state predicted draws so near,  
Time is too short to cloud the sky or clear !  
Waldo, the weather-wise, gave prophecy  
That morning, as they rode :—" This eve will see  
Our mountain road, my wife, 'twere well to know,  
Piled up with stubborn drifts of crusty snow ;  
And if the wind blows bleak as it does now,  
'Twill be a work to cross the mountain's brow."  
" Aye, Waldo, and it seems to me it might  
Be well to turn, and sleep at home to-night."  
So Mary spoke, in thinking 'twould be well  
To take the darkest view, e'en though improbable,

That she, when such suggestions forth had brought,  
Might find exactly what her husband thought.  
But Waldo bid her flee all fear and doubt,—  
The horse was strong—the dearborn, too, was stout,—  
No danger, but ere sunset they should be  
At home, in comfort with their happy three.

Quite weather-wise that day—the morning's mien  
Foretelling long what now the eye could glean—  
Those light-winged heaven-wonders, frosted air,  
That whirled and flew, and halted here and there,  
To rest but for a twinkling, then to rise,  
As though they might return and kiss the skies !  
Some twirled and chased each other as at play,  
While others found a spot at rest to stay,  
Beneath some jutting rocks, or roots of trees,  
That interlaced and sheltered from the breeze ;  
Some chanced to light in wagon-ruts of earth,  
Until a stronger blast dislodged their berth,  
And made them glide in scudding forms of white,  
Then rise in grace, and mingle in their flight  
With new-descending crystals from above,  
Again through air and over earth to rove.

Time slipped away, as always swift it will ;  
The horse kept on in pace contented still ;

The weather-beaten mountain tops of brown  
Grew white with nature's chilly coat of down ;  
Ah ! lifted heads, your cherished haughtiness  
Dares not disdain Life's most portentous dress !  
Transformed, the evergreens that lined the road  
Bent low and swayed beneath their clustered load ;  
Weird music, inharmonious from the grind  
Of wheels through sleet, packed hardly by the wind ;  
Loud tones in dissonance commingling, too,  
Of blasts unbroken where they whistled through.

Anon, the solemn solitude to mar,—  
Save where the eagles shriek their vengeful war,  
From hidden cavern to some eyrie soar ;  
Or save some wily fox, at times unhid ;  
The dash of doe and deer, or goat and kid,—  
A welcome view, they greet the mountain mill,  
That lends a cheer, although its wheels are still,  
As oft the storms around its timbers raved,  
As oft those storms unfaltering it braved ;  
The shingled roof, the mossy roof of time,  
Nor yet was hid with nature's falling rime,—  
Athwart its slant the drifting snow-flakes chase,  
Nor find a barrier, nor a resting-place—  
Else save those few that chance to find a way  
In crevices betwixt each mossy spray,



Or lining white the shingle shapes with sheen,  
Curled with a warp that widened them between ;—  
As minds unfixed in principle are blown  
About by every will, except their own ;  
While, as the snow 'twixt crack and crevice thin,  
Some minds find stable themes to rest within.

Thus was the mill ; one end built firm and sound  
Upon the level ledge of rocky ground ;  
The other, braced with upright posts that keep  
It firmly pendent o'er the stony steep.  
Amid these rough-hewn timbers, 'neath the mill,  
The well-worn water-wheel stood frozen still ;  
And as a fairy palace, all around,  
With icicles from rafters to the ground,  
In radiant glory, as a diadem,  
Set here and there with many a frosty gem,  
Fantastic more than ever royal crown,  
Pearl-set where'er the water trickled down ;  
Here clustered as the richest vineyard fruit—  
There, from a point of rock, a pensile shoot ;  
Here, where the waters flowed in purling sheet,  
Froze, as 'twere, crystal steps from crystal street.

Uncouth, these scenes amid, the miller stood,  
Well wrapped in olden cloak with cape and hood ;

There, tink'ring by his wheel, now frozen stiff,  
Drew often from his pipe a warming whiff,—  
The muffled sound of Waldo's wagon heard,  
And turned about to interchange a word :—  
“A pattern morn to cool a Christian's brain,—  
Where wend ye now ?” and Waldo drew the rein,  
To hear a little and be heard the more,  
To build a castle that was built of yore,  
To bridge a torrent that was bridged before,  
To plant a seed long grown to be a stalk,—  
No cold can numb the tongue of idle talk !  
“Then tell,” the miller said, “time lingers still,  
How sift the flakes about your Eagle Hill ?  
If you return before the morning dawn,  
You're strong of will, but stronger still of brawn !”  
Thus words passed round, and moments flitted on,  
Till Mary hinted that they must begone,  
If they would reach the promised village soon,  
*And pass that way again that afternoon.*

On, through the storm, again their way they plod,  
O'er slippery stone and over drifted clod ;  
Now round a bend, where lay the roadway bare ;  
Now by a steep decline, that needed care  
In horse and driver, too,—both half in doubt  
Exactly which might be the better route ;

Now by a drift that curled in fancy form,  
And took its shapes obedient to the storm ;  
Now o'er a rustic bridge, through sheltered nook,  
Where in the summer, ran a mountain brook,  
That sometimes lent its coolness, cheered the hearts  
Of way-worn travelers, bound for distant parts.

As now they passed adown this narrow glade,  
The seed that Mary's influence had laid  
In Waldo's mind, fresh burst ; a tender blade  
Sprung up from thriftless soil, when now he said :  
'I oft have heard you, Mary,—am I right ?—  
When seated round our hearth, ablaze with light,  
'Mid moans of rueful winds at dark of night,—  
Say that you knew (and know it all men should),  
'*Whatever happens, happens for some good.*'  
'Tis true, I own, that man is weak and blind ;  
That countless wonders 'scape his finite mind,  
While oceans, in their boundless roll and roar,  
Cast of their treasures few upon our shore,  
And stars above, whose orbits interlace,  
Are but the vaulted vestibule to space ;  
The great, the small, the very lack of end,  
None but a fool would try to comprehend.  
Such truths, and thousands more, that we believe,  
The feeble mind of man must needs receive,

Without the hope their occult themes to grasp.  
Nor am I then immured by bolt or hasp,  
Or locks or bars of narrow prejudice,  
To disbelieve all hidden cause, but this ;—  
Experience is my logic-book ; I turn  
Its well-worn illustrated leaves, and learn  
Of many a hapless day to you and me,  
Of many a baleful wind that ruffed our sea,  
And never, while it blew, blew calm again  
To us for good, nor yet to other men !”

She answered then : “ Because, perchance, you fail  
At once to see a good result, you quail  
In your belief in Love, and fain advance  
Your trust in all the so-called laws of chance.  
Events that we call ill, are building stones,  
Which, in themselves, no one a treasure owns,  
Yet form, when with the sure cement of time,  
A barrier that no ill can pierce or climb.”  
Then Wakdo smiled the smile that men will ray,  
When fancied triumph would its joys display,—  
As he whose cause is wrong will quick portray  
Fruition in a leer (a meaning way  
That worsted cowards, self-opined, gainsay).

But Mary knew too well her cherished theme ;  
Her thoughts were facts—no wild, fictitious dream ;

She knew his course of mind, as well as we  
 Know, by its guise, life flows within the tree;  
 Thus his reflections in her speech she blent,  
 And so forestalled his would-be argument.  
 "You fain would think my self-drawn theories are—  
     Evil lives not, yet evil stands shut out!  
 That I the harmony of truth would mar,  
     And spoil my specious plea in helpless doubt!  
 Nay, what more beautiful, when we reflect  
     (Ah! sweet evangel that 'twere well to ken!)  
 Those seeming ills from us God doth protect,  
     *Are griefs of good intent for other men.*  
 Thus, then, we build our fortress of defence,  
 O'er seen and guided by a Providence,  
 Who feels the burden that we carry hence."

Still on the journey's jog the travelers ride,  
 'Neath louring cliffs, or gloaming gulf astride,  
 O'er crumbling talus, nature's wrong emprise,  
 Through sabled woods of primordial guise;  
 Down fissures, where the storms to linger hate,  
 And echoing winds, themselves recriminate,  
 Some mighty rock, in ages of surmise,  
 Asunder rent,—through this their passage lies,  
 Permitted scarce the rugged walls to pass,  
 Barren and bare with lonely spears of grass.

Now dies the wind, storing itself perchance,  
Backing afar, recruiting an advance,—  
As when the garrulous to silence fall,  
That silence tells the greatest tale of all.

But hark! just merging from the granite cleft,  
A gust so fearful sweeping from the left,  
Strikes through the mortal, stirs the hidden soul,  
To quake for once at nature's musket-roll!  
Oh! sigh, ye winds, and moan, thou blast agone;  
Swell vengeful more, then die away—sigh on;  
What aged fathers of the forest earth  
Lie prostrate on the sod that gave them birth!  
What hopes of home they break in hearts, alas!  
The winds have fled—but where the mountain pass?  
A pass no more—ye hasty travelers—lo!  
Your homeward way is buried deep in snow!

Quick as a meteor in its wild career,  
The husband fearful from the gauntlet run,  
Courageous, just to know the mischief done,  
(For courage acts where lives an honest fear),  
More tightly drew his scarf and overcoat,  
More deeply sank his bearded chin and throat,  
And, storm-beat, standing out upon the shaft,  
Grasped tight the standards as he turned abaft,

The view to gain ; a fitting mien and brawn,  
Was he to cope with direful Aquilon !  
“Only a tree,” he said, “from root to branch,  
Half hidden in the conquering avalanche,  
Only these—but these have blocked the way ;”  
Then, smiling, said : “There’s one escape to-day !”  
A pallor chased the woman’s flushing cheek,  
And only actions gave their voice to speak ;  
A thousand fancies for the future wrought  
A silent tangle of the heart and thought ;  
Yet, ’mid the netted looming of events,  
Peered out withal the law of *Providence* ;  
The spirit knew the redolence and flush,  
And plucked the sweet arbutus from the brush !  
Aye, sweet ! But hearts will beat, and blood will rise  
And flaunt its color to a stoic’s eyes ;  
For this pure Woman’s proudest banner flies,  
And shames the man who cannot sympathize !

The features of cold chance were growing stern,  
And prompted Mary, in a half-suspicious tone,  
To ask, “Oh ! can we not this night return,  
And must we leave our children there alone ?”  
And then, as staunch old trees will laugh at those  
Obsequious twigs to every wind that blows,  
So Waldo tried to laugh away her fear,

By innuendo and mischievous jeer,  
At what she called "the good that springs from ill,"  
And "calm acceptance of her Father's will."  
Yet Waldo loved her—love delights to tease  
A little while, then set the heart at ease,—  
And so he answered, "Mary, don't you know  
Another road joins this a league below,  
Trends yon, and strikes a line beyond the mill,  
Then skirts the other slope of Eagle Hill?  
Thus we shall track along the nether road,  
And round the hill a mile from our abode ;  
A little haste go with us through the town,  
We'll clear the ledge before the sun is down."

So then, 'twas Mary's persevering bent,  
To make a catapult of incident,  
To break the unbelieving husband's wall,  
And thus absolve him from sophistic thrall ;  
She smiled obscurely, and was quick to say,  
"There was one good worked out for us to-day,—  
That miller's tongue, that rolled around like rhyme,  
Our progress fettered—urged ahead by time ;  
Then, had we lingered longer there, why, lo!  
We could not pass the cleft blocked up with snow ;  
Yet, had we never lingered—worse than all—  
Unweeting of the snow and forest fall,



At our return amid the dun of eve,  
Methinks I hear you, Waldo, captious grievé,  
Hard-met in such an un conjectured fate,  
By cold, night, storm—a fell triumvirate !”

Then Waldo seemed to hear her silence, too,  
As men almost convinced are wont to do.  
The tiny stream of faith was starting flow,  
There was no turning it from friend or-foe,  
And discontent—that poverty of heart—  
From all the wealth of Trust just stood apart.

But time rolled on (Time moves, but wearies not ;  
*We* weary when its fleetness is forgot).  
Through wooded copse, on bleak and barren path,  
Now sheltered from the storm’s tremendous wrath,  
By house bold-fronted on a smooth plateau,  
Unmoved, contending with earth’s cerements—snow,—  
Time still rolled on ; the clouded sun crept higher,  
And dim, at last, stood forth the village spire.

This village held its kinship with all towns,  
Revered its sages and enjoyed its clowns,  
Boasted its hall, its church and steepled chimes,  
Its weekly paper and its poet’s rhymes,  
Admitted all the gossiping that flew,

Retold the old and conjured something new ;  
World to itself, the tattle of the town  
Flew easily, as light as thistle-down,  
Wafted in whisper, floating here and there,  
Wherever blows a breeze of social air ;  
Alas ! with all its lightness, 'tis the seed  
That lodges somewhere and springs up a weed !

CANTO II.

“ A perfect woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort, and command.”—WORDSWORTH.

“ For nothing lovelier can be found  
In woman, than to study household good,  
*And good works in her husband to promote.*”—MILTON.

“ The world was sad,—the garden was a wild,  
And man, the hermit, sighed—till woman smiled.”—CAMPBELL

“ Great thoughts, great feelings came to them,  
Like instincts, unawares.”—MILNES.

“ By night, an atheist half believes a God.”—YOUNG.

## CANTO SECOND.

OH ! Life is not a lapse of time—a roll  
Of days and months ; age does not count by years,—

For all the vital moments of the soul  
Are born within, and flow by smiles and tears.  
Then, if my story's plot should not afford  
The twisting of a many-stranded cord,  
May not the noblest trains of thought be led  
Securely by a straight and simple thread ?  
And if my earnest muse should not consent  
To have her poesy drowned by incident,  
(As though a rustic life could never give  
The deeper themes that found the narrative),  
May not Simplicity great truths unveil,

And Virtue flow from out a garment-hem ?  
And poets string their pearls upon a tale,  
Or grow sweet fruits about a tasteless stem ?  
And yet the story's stream deliberate,

*May show that God, in working out His plot,  
Lets nothing in too early, nor too late ;  
Lets nothing needful ever be forgot ;*

*But grants us graciously the simplest lot,—  
To act in TRUST and with CONTENTMENT wait!*

Full twenty years ago, and may be more,  
A blue-eyed girl sat by a lowly door,  
Just shaded by a tumbling portico,  
That often trembled 'neath her tread of woe.  
Poor, motherless and sad, her pensive air  
Portrayed a noble nature struggling there,—  
But oh! to wait the evening sun that shed  
The shadows from a weary father's tread!  
No sister flower, nor brother sapling true,  
Their roots of sympathy around her threw;  
No kindred branches sent their fragrance nigh,—  
But oh! the searching pity of her eye  
Shone Heaven's reproach on each cold passer-by.  
But one there was, one stranger's step she wooed,  
Because he stirred her heart to gratitude—  
Yes! he—although himself could not have thought  
His gift too free, too precious to be bought.  
'Twas Sympathy!—a part of love that knows  
But little of the wealth its power bestows.  
And thus the watcher wooed the gracious while,  
Because he gave to her—*an honest smile!*  
Oh! what a friendly look or word can do!  
It seemed to her *she must be human too!*

He never knew the smile that lit his face  
Planted a seed—unconscious of the art—  
That rooted deeply in her childish heart,  
Where all the waves of time could not erase.  
He loved to watch her keen and quickened sense—  
Greater than his ;—he breathed that redolence,  
As lusty trees, when scarcely out in bud,  
Stretch forth their conscious branches overhead,  
To catch the early bloom and fragrance shed,  
Free, from the flowers the vernal air hath wed,  
Where new-born galaxies the acres stud.  
Sometimes the motherless stood up to wait  
That coming, by the old and broken gate ;  
And when the good hand came and tapped her chin,  
She seemed to drink his tender interest in.  
One eve he asked, “ My child, how old are you ? ”  
“ I ’ m twelve, kind gentleman,” her sweet voice said ;  
“ I have,” said he, “ a little boy of two ;  
His mother, child (he wept), like yours, is dead ! ”  
And then she turned to him with artless grace,  
Her blue eyes shone like stars in heaven’s face,  
Then told him, in her sweet and simple way,  
“ Kind sir, I wish you ’ d bring him here to play.”  
Oft, after that, beneath the leafy dome  
(You ’ d not suspect it, if you never knew),  
The girl of twelve, the little boy of two,

Played in the shrubs around the lonely home.  
They nested in the growth, they played a spell,  
And now and then from her the warning fell—  
“Be careful, oh! be careful of my vine!  
My mother planted that, and now 'tis mine.”  
And then she turned away, pensive and sad,  
Until her playmate innocently bade  
Her watch him trip to where a sapling grew,  
    Beneath the stately tree that lent them shade,  
    Until he clasped it in his arm and said,  
“This little tree does not belong to you!”  
    In words whose accents were so strangely laid.  
She laughed, and answered, just as though 'twere true—  
“No, that is yours, dear little boy of two!”

One summer evening, when the zephyr-flow  
Scarce bore the chorus of the cattle's low,  
The motherless sat pensive by the door,  
Lost in the maze her fancy built before.  
The sun no longer on the cottage played,  
The lengthened shadows melted into shade,  
The insect world began its serenade,  
Till to the watcher of this nether world  
The palimpsest of Morpheus unfurled.  
She dreamed herself just where she was, but she  
Was now her vine, twined with a hardy tree,



Rugged and staunch, that sprang there suddenly.  
 She clung to it—she loved, she loved to love,  
 For Love she loved, since Love is born above ;  
 But oh ! when Love its every life had given,  
 And Heaven seemed fair to make her earth a heaven,  
 The poor vine, blasted by the frost, one night,  
 Soon drooped and vanished from her mortal sight.  
 But time wore on ; the vine, while life was mirth,  
 Had dropped a seed into the mother earth,  
 And sprouting now, it crept along the ground,  
 Until the well-known sapling tree it found.  
 How proudly then the two together grew !

One with the other, 'neath the grateful shade,  
 Where oft in summer afternoons had played,  
 The girl of twelve, the little boy of two.

But now, those twenty years or more have sped—  
 Where is the blue-eyed face and golden head ?  
 The parent vine and tree have long been wed.  
 (But we have lost the “little boy of two,”  
 And only half the dream, as yet, is true.)  
 Love twined the graceful vine and generously  
 Adorned the knotty trunk and twisted limb,  
 And cherished these as wholly hers, but he  
 Loved less herself than loved her love for him.  
 Then need I tell you, Reader, these are twain,

With whom we rode before and ride again?  
 Now, homeward, o'er their former steps they trace ;—  
 The earth has changed the features of her face !  
 Where'er the circling winds and snows have played,  
 Dame Nature rollicks in a masquerade !

'Tis Waldo asks (for want of else to say),  
 "How was your parson's hoary head to-day?"  
 The trace of sneer that fed this interest,  
 Deep-rankled in the woman's nobler breast,  
 Because he never could appreciate  
 Her *motives*—though she supererogate ;—  
 Those motives by the higher instinct fed,  
 From sires of honored faith inherited.

When woman's actions take an erring course,  
 And duty's aims with steps imprudent start,  
 Let men but trace her actions to their source,  
 And read the heroism of her heart.  
 O men ! 'tis an ignoble thing to doubt,—  
 Her love of duty drowns her reason out !

True womanhood ! that loves to heal, to nurse,  
 Both soul and body of her foes and friends !  
 Thus Mary answers and her life defends :  
 "The good old man is slowly growing worse ;

And still if he were sick, and I were, too,  
 If twenty mountains 'twixt our houses grew,  
 If all his congregation round him stood,  
 I still should prove my right to womanhood!"  
 (Such is a woman's ill-contrived defence—  
 She draws not argument from truth or sense,  
 But seeks to prove her rights by vehemence!)

"All well enough," the callous husband said;  
 "But all his neighbors—tell me, are they dead,  
 That you, who have a family of your own,  
 Must once a fortnight leave them all alone?"  
 She answered: "Waldo, if this heart of mine  
 Had powers to cheer, to elevate, refine,  
 A single creature—stranger though he be,  
*I'd never prove myself unwomanly!*  
 But oh! I never, never, can forget,

    When I was left a poor, neglected child,  
 One afternoon he passed the road—and smiled,—  
 Oh, how it prints my page of memory yet!  
 'Twas all the treasure that my life possessed!  
 Ingratitude! couldst thou my soul infest?  
 Ingratitude is stealing at the best;  
 It gyves the actions of another's heart,  
 Then robs the generous feeling from his breast,—  
 The very thing with which he would not part!"

"Aye! Aye!"—the carper still his posture kept,—  
 "You stayed so long I thought you must have slept;  
 And now you'd rue your *duty*, if 'twere told,  
 This night may come and blast your life with cold!"  
 She faltered, spoke,—“Yes, yes, that man of God,  
 Once warned me where my reckless spirit trod,  
 Then showed me how the linking of events,  
 Was all the perfect plan of Providence;  
 When trials in my way of progress stood,  
 Trust knew no trials, found in all things, good:  
 And now his race on earth is nearly run,—  
 Say, shall his only mourner be the son?  
 That boy (her voice was low), I always knew  
 Best by the name of ‘Little Boy of Two.’”  
 Oh? let me give the fruits, that long ago,  
     Bloomed in my breast,—to him, who graciously,  
     Could nurse the holy life of Sympathy,  
     And daily deal his manly smile to me,—  
 While keeping watch upon the portico!

The mother's eyes with dews of trouble wet,  
 Could not the distance of her home forget,  
 Since mother's hearts, for e'er in cares immersed,  
 Are strongly apt to picture things the worst;  
 And 'tis not strange that she who oft has stood  
 The hardships of a mountain livelihood,

Should dread to breast keen frosts and driving snow,  
Or feel the worry of an anxious woe :  
For woman's heart is woman's heart—though found  
In halls of wealth where luxuries abound,  
Or in the homeless outcast, wandering where  
Strange hearts may pity but no sorrows share.

Now wending on their ever-upward course,  
Distrusting, somewhat now, their faithful horse,  
For each new pace is harder than before ;  
One fancies trouble,—ah ! the other more !  
These snowy slopes that helped their outward bound,  
Became more deeply drifted rising ground ;  
And so, when step by step from right we stray,  
Our course is easy in the downward way ;  
But when we turn to rise, the sloping track  
Betrays our weaknesses and fights us back.  
Not only this impedes return—alas !  
Our way is drifted and is hard to pass ;  
For frequent actions form a habit swift,  
As do th' incessant snow-flakes build a drift.

And such they feared would be the homeward way—  
Would it be vain to look for home that day ?  
The promised road they met and turned around,  
But horse and driver scarcely know this ground !

Though Waldo sometimes tried this way before,—  
A little knowledge bars the way to more,—  
Experience too late may bring its lore !

A nervous temperament will hold its sway  
In spite of all the reasoning power can say,  
And Mary unexempted from the law,  
Her husband queried in the doubts she saw ;  
Well knowing now how soon the night-shades drew,  
Half-tremulous, inquired if he knew  
The ups and downs, defects and merits, through.  
Assurance full, the virile partner brought,  
Ingeniously her peace of mind besought :  
A better road, 'twas ne'er his lot to see ;  
(Rare state of indefectibility !)  
"That of itself," she answered, " will suffice,  
To prove, perhaps, the peril over twice ;  
In calm most idle, soonest brought to grief,  
In storms most wary, surest from the reef ;  
Conspicuous boulders may our progress wall,  
But one unheeded pebble makes us fall."

Though controverting each,—'twas no pretense,  
Both loved to sip colloquial succulence,  
And every hap, and every theme she spoke,  
Proved in the die of truth a graven stroke

Unfinished yet, too soft to bear the press,  
That stamps our future one of happiness.

Sometimes they cheered the frosted glebe to fing,  
Where bleakly blew the undisputed wind,  
But now and then a drift piled by the storm,

Intrenched the victims of the Borean war,  
Or hung in ever serrate lines of form,

As angry breakers threatening the shore.

Then in the glen—where spirits love to share  
That buoyant poise which hemlock branches bear,  
The sylvan graces culminating there :—

Here, summer verdure wafted by the breeze,

Ill-brooks the winter's ceaseless cruelties ;

And now, across the pathway, in the glade,

No salient sun, disturbs the darkling shade.

But then, the crooked oak that rears his head

With mossy trunk from brooklet's pebbly bed,

Wreathed high his idle roots above the ground,

To bridge the stream, or angler's nook surround ;

To count the ripples as they come and go,

To lay their shadows on the sands below,

To ask the waters why they hurry so,

And hold awhile the leaves and twigs that chance

To float beneath their rustic portico,

And merrily, merrily, on the ripples dance,  
Harmonious with the cadence of the flow.

The gloom, the dreaded gloom of murky night,  
Was stifling fast, the day's soft breath of light,  
And through the tempest-driven trees of pine,  
The darkness delved in dreariness malign.  
Upon the trackless way the heroes ride,  
Nor granite bank, nor friendly tree to hide.  
The snow fine-ridged upon the wagon floor,  
Smooth, crested sharply round the step and door ;  
And every corner, crease or tiny nook,  
The gearing, curtains, top and panels took  
White lining ; as the cumulus black cloud  
Gleams on its edge, a silver braided shroud !  
As time rolls on, they too roll on, but slow,  
Up hill, through forest wild, athwart plateau,  
On, follow them ; their fruitful wish and will  
Has brought them to the turn at Eagle Hill !  
Then through the moss-hung forest, weird and wild,  
Where summer scenes the pensive soul beguiled ;  
Mid trees revered by uncomputed time,  
That lend support for slender stalks to climb  
And shoot their tender tendrils, curled to hold,  
(For nature is not selfish, is not cold),  
In leal dependence to the branches old.



Time-worn and scarred, now here and there an old  
And crooked oak, by wintry blasts half-felled,  
Leaned over on some younger, in its prime,  
As yet erect and unenthralled by time.  
O slender stalk of Youth ! believe and own,  
Young inexperience cannot stand alone ;  
Pause ! if thou wouldst thine elders' counsel spurn,—  
Wise men are wise because they love to learn !  
O bowed and broken tree ! may never youth  
Refuse thee comfort, for thy long-taught truth !

The road whereon they traveled round the hill,  
Is but a narrow track, a rocky sill ;  
Walled inwardly by crags,—yet less a foe,  
Than on the other hand, the gulph below !  
'Twas now that frightful fancies, flitted through  
The mind of Mary—who could fancy woo—  
Of hidden danger, some loose rock perchance,  
A heaving, thundering, rolling avalanche ;  
Or, as the maiden hast'ning by the mere,  
To whom the dun of eve distils a fear,  
Perhaps through night's thick folds her glimpse inclines  
Facts furnish fancy boldly with designs ;—  
For strange it is, the sights our hearts love least,  
Are, for our eyes, an over-welcome feast,  
And though we dread the most distressing news,

The chance to hear, we are not wont to lose !  
So, when upon the dangerous mountain side,  
An anxious mother feels her courage tried,  
Abstracts from every dim-lit object, fear,  
And fancies some insidious covert near ;  
What wonder that the sprite of fancy saith,  
“ Those fitful gusts are but the darts of Death,  
And in the hideous swelling of the wind,  
To dirge, and cries of woe, a semblance find.”

At such a time the stalwart mountaineer,  
Turned to his wife and whispered words of cheer,  
Told thrilling stories of long years ago,  
How he had braved the most terrific snow ;  
And when alone, in wooded wilds adrift,  
Though clouds hung low, he always saw them lift ;  
“ Ah, yes !” she said, “ to light creations form,  
And beautify the calm that follows storm !”  
For when has not the peace of calm enhanced  
The beauty of a scene ? When lie entranced  
The fallow fields, the sweet sequestered dell,  
Where in the Naiad freshness, dews dispel ;  
The glittering leaves, the newly swarded slope,  
Serenely smile beneath the azure cope ;  
The rippling richness of the golden grain,  
Just after fitful gusts of driving rain,

Reflects the Occident whose shifting cloud,  
Deals plenteously, but slowly draws its shroud,  
To greet the glorious resurrection, nigh,  
Of Beauty slumbering in the earth and sky.  
Methinks I hear a storm's tumultuous roar,  
Cast wails of woe upon the heavenly shore!  
Infamous Passion! Power of the air!  
That swept from earth a life divinely fair,  
Cleft rocks and hills and rent the veil in twain,  
With plaudits of a Saviour's bloody stain!  
Then came the glorious calm; sweet lute of Love,  
Attuned on earth to harmonies above;  
The Christian world is lulled in placid rest,  
And finds true peace within the Saviour's breast—  
That seeks man's love, the honey of the flower,  
With childlike tenderness, yet God-like power!  
Oh man! espouse religion's holy theme;  
Act thy belief,—faith cannot idly dream.  
Be thine all virtues—lasting honors these—  
Thy golden apples of Hesperides!

The night, sublime in nature's powerful pride,  
Drew near, but lingered o'er the mountain-side,  
Dim-streaked with dusky pine on rocky sill,  
Grim, gray and purple stood old Eagle Hill,  
The pale reflections dimmed upon the snow,

And darkness waxed an unrelenting foe.  
O, wondrous agent of thy Maker—Light!  
Thyself the day,—thou ruler of the night,  
For darkness at thy parting beck is born,  
And kneels before thee at th' approach of morn!  
Chameleon robe, thou art all nature's hues,  
Aurora glistens in the morning dews,  
Bids begone the dismal night of strife,  
Then sparkles in the dews of morning life,  
Makes beautiful, man's noonday sky appear,  
Sweetens his toil, and gives his rest a cheer;  
Paints brightly Love (the hue) of man (the flower),  
Till steals around his sacred sunset hour,  
When Trust, the shadow, grows as life's short sun  
Of fleet mortality is nearly done,  
Scarce melting in the shades of death below—  
As shadows always melt to shade—when, lo!  
From yonder deep, impenetrable cope,  
Shines out for man the brilliant star of hope,  
Serenely riding on death's struggling wave—  
A torch to light the soul that leaves the grave!

(As he who tunes his instrument will stray,  
Unconscious, from the strain he sought to play,  
To strike a chord or catch a fancied air  
He hears within—yet really knows not where;

So, too, I wander from my tale untaught,  
 To strike the chord of its suggested thought,  
 And seek t' express th' untutored feeling strong,  
 Stirred from an innate love of silent song.  
 But, Reader, once again, by fancy, share  
 The dismal scene, as though you, too, were there.)

At every boisterous blast that bleakly blew,  
 The timorous Mary shuddered as she drew  
 More close to him—whose arm was powerless, too,  
 Against the elements,—and this she knew ;  
 Yet 'tis but human, first to plan our fate,  
 Believe its advent, though we doubt the date ;  
 Then seek the heart that will commiserate.  
 True to his manhood, with her warp of fear,  
 Good Waldo wove the woof of hopeful cheer ;  
 True to his Manhood ! aye, and true to Love,—

What though in years ago the twain were one,—  
 Yet actions past and actions present prove .

*Life's tale of love had only just begun !*

True to his Manhood !—this began to grow,—  
 To teach a woman strength—support her woe,  
 The secrets of philosophy reveal,  
 And teach her how to know as well as feel.  
 He shields her from the world and fights her foes,  
 She ministers, and healeth all his woes.

Thus, Waldo, full of pure complacency, brought  
His brawny arm, decisive, round her waist,  
The fragile graces of her nature braced,  
    And touched with tenderness, persuasive sought  
    To reembark on calmer streams of thought.  
For though he knew the peril of the hour,  
Still o'er the soul's hearth-glow he loved to cower,  
That round its brightness she could nestle, too,  
No matter what the night without, might do!  
For oh! there is no sadness of the heart,  
No storms of life, no tears, no secret smart,  
No heavy spirit, but can surely find  
Its own bright hearth to cheer its darkling mind.  
And if, amid the drear of cold despair,  
It seeks within, 'twill find a fireside there,  
So warm, so radiant, that 'twere sweet to claim  
Its coals of Faith and Hope's aspiring flame!

Now, Waldo toiled to twine her thread of thought,  
To bathe her fevered sensibility  
In Lethe's deep and ever-cooling sea,  
    Whose flow hath many a peaceful moment brought.  
He told her—"Bid avaunt that pensive spell,  
And forge on me the chain that binds you well!"  
"I only thought," she said, "that winds so strong  
Can never blow with such a fury long;

Fierce gales are ever sweeping o'er the earth,  
But even they to some great good give birth :  
Some twig, perhaps, inclined a wilful way,  
Bends right at last, before the whirlwind's sway ;  
And though the staunchest trees uprooted fall,  
The righted twig shall grow to rule them all."

That solemn drear, a stormy night will roll,  
Athwart the path of Nature's troubled soul,  
Hails powers from Morpheus—flings a somnolence  
About the spirit's missive—social sense.  
Perturbed the mother then, for through her brain  
Thoughts flew unbidden, in a ceaseless train,  
Herself, the mythic daughters of the night,  
Wove out her thread of fate by power finite ;  
Closer to Waldo drew her frailty then,  
Buried her face upon his side again ;  
Cheering, she knew his arm about her drawn—  
As steals the morning sun across the lawn ;—  
Slowly their way pursue, but in each heart  
The tangling hope and fear still play a part.  
Too well we know the current in one breast,—  
Listen,—the Mountaineer will tell the rest.

" Mary, it seems to me my thoughts are filled  
With that strange theme you often have instilled—

Or tried to—in my heart; would you explain  
Once more to me the mystery again?"  
Now fled for once, the terrors of the night!  
For 'tis a glorious portent for the right,  
When he who carps at Christians with delight,  
Unbidden seeks, with interest increased,  
To hear the truth he tries to love the least.

Brusk as was *Waldo's* manner and his mien,  
A tender heart he carried just within.  
For not the beauteous lawn, the fragrant mead,  
Nor fallow field, from rocky roughness freed,  
Prove that within the earth's fair bosom lies  
The precious metal, men so highly prize;  
Nay, 'tis the rugged surface, bleak and bare,  
That indicates the treasure buried there!  
Ah! rugged though thy life, humanity,  
And primitive thy customs though they be,  
That powerful hand, however sinewy,  
Obeys a heart and sets the manhood free!  
Avaunt! fair forms and features, if ye prove  
No index to the fairer feature—Love!

Now, *Mary* felt the real significance,  
When head and heart unitedly advance;



For Waldo asks to hear ; can she refuse,  
 When tears of gratitude her eyes suffuse ?  
 Her logic was not new ; the very law of love  
 Must prove that He who is that law above,  
 Will overrule for these frail forms of dust  
 All things for good—for Good itself is Trust.

Then Waldo laughed. But serious strivings these,—  
 For laughter often proves the mind's misease,  
 And said, "It follows if your doctrine's true,  
 We must be right, no matter what we do!"  
 "Ah! but," she answered, "God can overrule,  
 The abject action of a wicked fool ;  
 His purpose set beneath a holy ban,  
     While they who reap the good dare not defend ;  
     The wicked means have made a wicked end,  
 Although it prove a benefit to man.  
 If ill designs a good result afford,  
 'Twas never born of man, but of the Lord ;  
*And motives, only merit a reward.*  
 When, who our life's most cherished pathway haunts,  
 Mistakes the seeds of flowers for poison plants,  
 And sows them till our fragrant path is strewed,  
 To whom belongs the debt of gratitude ?  
 And shall we thank the wicked hearts, of old,  
 Who bound the great Apostle,—Joseph sold,

Or in the prison's stern privations hurled,  
The man whose *Pilgrim's Progress* moved the world ?'

While Waldo sought withal to contravene  
The truth his conscience honestly had seen ;  
Fresh hopes inspired her breast—that never could  
Endure his studied, cold, indifferent mood.  
(There's nothing palls the social sweets of ease,  
Like those, who, often genial, seem to freeze.  
Their purposed reticence is most akin  
To half-cracked hick'ry nuts, picked with a pin ;  
They yield a bit but keep the most within.)

When first conviction's germ springs in his vein,  
The bigot deprecates its power with clinging pain,  
And seeks his former rest of mind to gain :  
Alas ! he cannot grasp it unalloyed,  
'Tis but a shadow now, a fleeting void !  
Though truth be pain, pain too, is unbelief,  
And error's sea still beats at truth's fair reef ;  
Fool ! struggle on ! sink, where thou canst not ride !  
The Eden shores of Truth can spare thy pride !  
This is the sturdy man—the Mountaineer  
Convinced forsooth ! (yet prejudice is dear),  
And now, within, the struggling power he crushed,  
Pursue that shadow's void again he must ;

Life glitters yet, age has not brought its rust,  
Manly and free, what need as yet for trust ?  
Alas ! for all the pride of mortal dust,  
That all the strength of truth will not prefer,  
But hangs high hope, again on gossamer !

A mingling strange, this nightly spirit tryst,  
When hyperborean arguments assist,  
And snowflakes deepen on the steepy rough,  
And converse thrills ; the wind tells tale enough.  
No language can, like silence, deeply reach,  
When soul with soul thought's pathway loves to pleach,  
The clattering click of sleet, pelts plenteous, fierce,  
The frigid air benumbs with cutting keen,  
Nor stays his power, the home-spun stuff to pierce,  
But shrieks the Arctic clime that he has seen !

Yet hear again, from that cold, cringing form,  
The mother's voice, for nonce, supplant the storm ;  
'Tis tremulous ; "Sooth, Waldo, if you say  
We're on the ledge round Eagle Hill, we may,  
Be scarcely more than half a mile away  
From home : but oh ! a storm like this will swell  
Miles into leagues,"—she started ! hear what fell  
From her and him—as though a fiend had called  
Them both, to cry ! "*Stalled ! help us ! we are stalled !*"

With lash and threat'ning word and act, they urge  
Their fainting horse! 'tis vain to hope to merge  
From out the deep'ning drift, that drinks the cold,  
And flouts their haste to reach the fire-fold!  
Shall night alone be Death's triumphant pall?  
Shall Death alone release the nightly thrall?  
The winds are yelling, demon-like, at bay!  
The savage missiles dance before the fray!  
Bereft of Truth or Nature's sympathy,  
They revel in a human enemy!  
Now Waldo nerves himself—resolved to do—  
Advances thus:—"Dear wife, I trust that you  
May bide my quick return; now wrap you tight,  
In this my blanket; hold aloft the light!"  
(So saying, strikes his flint and steel with ire,  
While fitful gusts dispute the right of fire  
Ungraciously; but Waldo thrice again,  
Endeavors,—and his effort is not vain.)

The bright flame flickered as a mother's hope  
About her boy who climbs ambition's slope;  
How wondrous weird, that cold and dismal scene!  
The glow warm-tinted all the drifted sheen,  
Shone dimly up the steep and craggy wall  
That hemmed them near and grimly frowned on all:

But oh! what revelation worse than this;  
*They face, and overhang a precipice!*  
 But tongue and pen alike fail to express,  
 How light reveals a darkness fathomless!

The virile Waldo, dauntless as he might,  
 Shrank as he rose, and caught the vacant sight;  
 The narrow road, here curved at angle lay,  
 A lurking danger, even in the day.  
 Alas! for travelers, and alas! for horse!  
 Both blinded to the road's insidious course,  
 Stood witness, how they faced the precipice!  
 Ambition crowns itself at death's abyss!  
 How every nerve was strung—and justly too,  
 To urge the horse, their human will to do!  
 But Providence, who rules the stormy wild,  
 A snow-drift on the dreadful marge had piled,  
 A frosty barrier blown 'twixt life and death!  
 Oh, trustless mortals! rushing into snares!  
 Forgetting that God's ways must needs be theirs,  
 And theirs be wholly His, when theirs are faith.  
 Death only is assured us—life is lent;  
*Escape is life's peculiar element;*  
 And living, too, is work; nevertheless,  
 God may blight our energies, to bless.

The Mountaineer, with quick, impetuous stride,  
Leaped out upon the ever drifting tide,  
And with a stern monition to his wife,  
Pushed forward in the elemental strife  
With these hoarse words, consonant with the night ;  
“ Be with yourself, and hold aloft the light,  
At times for me ; ’twill be a beacon then  
To guide my steps when I return again !”  
She answered not,—she could not if she would,  
All muted by the scene in which she stood ;  
An actor, only but too real, too true,  
Too strangely terrified, too weirdly new !

The wife her husband’s form soon lost ; for oh !  
He too, soon grew bewildered in the snow ;  
And now, the flicker of the fallow light,  
Illumed the awful truth writ by the night,  
Hung over heavens and earth the incubus  
Of stern reality—that haunts her thus !  
Then sank the mother—farthest from the frost,  
Buried her face, and scarcely whispered,—“ Lost !”

The only warmth that bitter night bestowed,  
Was in the heart that felt, the tears that flowed.  
Blow, wanton winds ! with cruel vigor blow !

For thou art God's, and God is not her foe!  
She knew that He was Love, and Love is just,  
And knowing that they only pray who trust ;  
Threw off her callous burden and her care,  
By seeking sweet relief in humble prayer.  
Oh, Reader! do you think it, then amiss,  
To pray with such a troubled mind as this?  
Had not her Huguenot grandsires engaged  
In prayer when storms of persecution raged?

She asked her Father—source of every power,  
To be with her, and hers, in this chill hour,  
And made a theme of this, her orison,  
Her husband's trust in Heaven's begotten son ;  
A trust that finds in God's mysterious ways,  
An endless theme for thankfulness and praise.

She paused, unclosed her eyelids, half-surprised,  
For lost in prayer, she scarcely realized  
The truth ; till wildly wildered, staring round,  
Her frame half-rigid, held her kneeling, bound ;  
Thus seeming for the great unknown to wait,  
And seeming, too, to woo a plotted fate,  
Yet recreant to the storm's tremendous ire,  
Seem'd ripe to make the snowy depths her pyre !

And yet unmoved, her hands she tightly clasped,  
Her vision lost ! Then, suddenly she grasped  
Her shawl again, as by some instinct led,  
And wildly drew it o'er her hooded head ;  
Shrank back, oblivious to the things of sight,  
And only heard the wailings of the night.



**CANTO III.**

“O love! in such a wilderness as this.”—CAMPBELL.

“We grant, 'tis true, that Heaven from human sense  
Has hid the secret paths of Providence;  
But boundless Wisdom, boundless Mercy may  
Find even for those bewildered souls a way.”—DRYDEN.

—“Some with thankful love are filled,  
If but one streak of light,  
One ray of God's good mercy, gild  
The darkness of their night.”—TRENCH.

“But Death returns an answer sweet;  
My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after heat.”—TENNYSON.

“‘A warmth within the breast would melt’  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And, like a man in wrath, the heart  
Stood up and answered, ‘I have felt.’”—IBID.

“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”—COWPER.

### CANTO THIRD.

ALL day the driven flakes, like ocean's foam,  
Raged round that lonely little mountain home,  
Twirled high and low, pursuing in retreat,  
As if a vertigo was all their meet ;  
Against the cabin, where the roadway ran,  
A mighty drift to rear its shape began,  
Of crystals pure, and true in each respect,  
Nor cut, nor fashioned to a single sect ;  
Yet reared to one, and by one Architect !  
In ill-timed gayety, they seemed to laugh,  
While piling up a shapeless cenotaph  
To absent members, or to some unknown,  
Till chimney sat upon a whitened throne !

All day the work progressed in wonted style,  
And Nannie played a mother's part the while ;  
Sometimes she ventured out to bring some wood,  
To feed the fire ; and oftentimes she stood  
All listless by the frosted window glass,  
Ornate with icy branches, boughs and leaves,

Rich arabesque with stalks in shocks and sheaves,  
And forms fantastic, trees and ferns and grass,  
All tangled in a net-work, void of form,  
That half obscured the aspect of the storm.  
From morn till noon, and afternoon, she still  
Could see the drift rise on the window-sill,  
Higher and higher against the sash, until  
The view adown the road she stood to meet,  
From out her moody gaze, was closed complete.

All day she spent a welcome to prepare ;  
Set things in order, cooked the common fare,  
And where she moved, and what she sought to do,  
She naively watched her homely retinue,  
Till now the sickly sunlight seemed to drink  
Its last draft from the vale of Neversink ;  
Then drew the table out upon the floor,  
And spread its cloth, as she was wont before,  
Set out the dishes, counted each a share—  
Prognostic that they all would gather there ;  
Fixed round the plates, old, cracked and notched and worn,  
The worse for use, for things will wear forlorn.

The sun had sunk obscurely in the west,  
And wrapped in gloom that home with comfort blessed ;  
The wind blew still, its trumpet sounding shrill,

And shook the house that braved it with a will ;  
The aged oaks, that groaned and bowed and bent,  
Remembrance of past storms around them sent,  
And oft reechoed through the forest far,  
Some falling hero of the wintry war.

When Nan had all her preparations made,  
To keep her vigils, artful ease essayed,—  
The babe within the cradle snugly stowed,  
And set it by the hearth that warmly glowed ;  
Drew round the settle with a simple grace,  
And stood it opposite the fire-place ;  
Perched then herself into its corner seat,  
And rocked the cradle gently with her feet.  
The brother nestling by her, stretched his form  
Before the brilliant burning cheer and warm.  
Thus, while they waited, high the fire blazed,  
Into its form in reverie they gazed,  
And all was cheerful, generous, serene,  
While Vesta must have smiled upon the scene.

Brightly the fire illumed the scenes it found,  
Evinced the stillness with a crackling sound ;  
Strangely the shadows danced upon the wall,  
And falsified each other where they met,  
Within th' aureola, that flamed for all,

And gave the value to each silhouette.  
Disconsolate, the house-dog whined his song,  
And seemed to tell that something must be wrong ;  
Slowly it seemed, yet fleet it was, the hours  
Passed by for ever, as do fading flowers ;  
And they who would an earnest vigil keep,  
    Divining ill a child's conjectured fate,  
Chanted vespers in unbidden sleep,  
    Before the honest time-piece told 'twas eight.

Sleep is the only remedy for pain,  
For sore distress, until we wake again ;  
But when there comes the last, the final sleep,  
'Tis but to wake eternal bliss to reap.

Once Nannie woke, and somnolent she gazed  
Upon the dusky dial, all amazed ;  
For never in her mem'ry could she date  
A time when they had lingered up so late.  
The fire had palled away, but still the glow  
Of ashen embers drowsily would show  
The scene within ;—the scene without—ah !—told  
Its aspect to the ear—snow, wind and cold !  
She caught the silent spell, and looked again  
Upon the time, and wondered—half-past ten !  
Then, wan and weary watching, somewhat sad,

Laid on the fire the last few sticks she had,  
Awaited till the flames their flurry vied,  
For height and heat and lusty crackle, too,  
As if a roaring fire were something new !  
Then light on tiptoe, half dissatisfied,  
She stepped across the old responding floor,  
And paused to open, just a crack, the door.

With unexpected gust, the wind betook  
Itself to mastery—trembling, fiercely shook  
The open door, and snatched from Nannie's hold,  
With harsh loud bang, as raucous, rude and bold,  
Unmastered in its ill-ascendent pride,  
Cold Boreas the door held open wide.

Then, shimmering out its wasted glow, the fire  
Illumed the wintry scene with alien light,  
(As though some lone wayfarer might be near,  
Wishing a sweet parenthesis of cheer),

The fence, the brake, whate'er the storm-king's ire  
Had masked with snow and veiled with surly night.  
The dog, aroused so strangely from his sleep,  
Stood up, with look intent, and growled as deep,—  
Prurient, always his import to keep.  
The younger children, lost in dreamland dear,  
Startled, but only dreamed a whit more queer.  
“Hush, Hector !” Nannie whispered, scarcely mild ;

“Be still, old fellow, or you’ll wake the child!”  
Then added thoughtfully, “The storm runs wild.”  
Now shuddering and shivering, she snatched  
The door again, and held it safely latched.  
She listened breathlessly, and then surveyed  
The weird, suggestive scene—she was afraid!  
Unharméd yet, knew not whence her fear,  
Nor why she wiped away a self-born tear.  
She was alone; the dog had crouched again  
Upon the hearth; the clock ticked louder then;  
The winds their signal cordon round them drew;  
The last log on the fire burned in two,  
And crackled as the red-lipped embers kissed  
The mossy bark that, snow-wet, freshly hissed;  
The kettle high upon the pot-hook hung,  
Its long-drawn carol still more listless sung.  
Unmoved, yet lost within the narrow bound,  
She shrank to hear her step’s intrusive sound;  
And while the spell grows on—a voice afar!  
She knows the sound! No! could it be the war  
Of elements, that spit their frozen gore  
At this, fair Vesta’s shelter, sieged by Thor?

Then Nannie trod again the conscious floor,  
And sat herself to watch the fire once more,  
And list the ranting winds—ranting, forsooth!



Those winds are chanting woeful tales of truth !  
She heard them high across the chimney whistle,  
Untwine the vine and intertwine the thistle,  
Draw in their flight the galaxy of sparks,  
Mingling like fire-flies in summer parks,  
A heavenward-bound and rich Pactolian stream  
Of meteors, born with earth's ephemeral gleam ;  
So as those sparks that haste to soar above,  
Stealing the real prerogative of love,  
Amid such arrogant contumely then,  
Are blotted out and never found again !  
Yes ! this is those of men whose cherished ire  
Is but to swell their vanity—that fire  
That kindled first on earth when Adam fell,  
From some stray spark that hither hied from Hell !

Poor Nan, with woman's care and watching fraught,  
With more than childish gravity had thought,  
With more than thrice her years' maturity,  
Brooked well the time with stern philosophy,  
The spirit of a manly courage drew,  
But to support the fears that women woo.  
Then, with the friendly fire's phoenix gleam,  
She sank into a somewhat troubled dream.

Turn once again to find the mother, where  
All the elements incite to prayer.

She finds within the spirit's opening tome  
 The fairest and the truest songs of home.  
 Sweet home ! is not of man alone, the lair,  
 Peace, Sympathy and Love, they too, live there ;  
 Ah ! wanderer, pause—for strangers wait for thee,  
 T' invite thy rest beneath their Upas tree !  
 Thrice happier he whose only dwelling-place  
 Is in a humble home—God's means of grace,—  
 Than he to whom the dismal lot befalls  
 Of dwelling homelessly in palace walls !  
 Since God calls heaven our home, 'tis Christian leaven  
 That works to make these earthly homes a heaven.  
 O ! how a mother's heart must beat when night  
 Steals round and shuts the human part of sight,  
 Leaves three so dear, so helpless, far away,  
 'Twixt whom and her a storm has raged all day,  
 That palls the hope at every rueful moan,  
 And cloyes the breast with this one thought—"alone!"

Could we, by use of word or wield of hand,  
 The might and tenor of the winds command,  
 We'd fill as full in slow adversity,  
 The sails that waft the hours on pleasure's sea.  
 Thus too, the mother weary of the hour,  
 • And mindful of the chilling ebb of power,  
 Yet with a purpose, dimly sketched for right,

Resolved to breast the Hyperborean night.  
With some vague strife for heartless utterance,  
Held for the moment in some hideous trance,  
She yelled with maddened voice her husband's name,  
Half aimless and half frantic, 'too, became,  
Paused not to list for aught of human sound,  
But heedless, leaped upon the drifted ground.  
As hard the task, as wild her iron will,  
To battle with the storm upon the hill ;  
Without one low, initial gleam of cheer,  
She struggles on in darkness—dead to fear,  
Nor recks the craggy wall, nor slippery slide,  
Braves ruthless winds and ploughs the shifting tide,  
When pressed to sink, a frosty couch to find,  
She casts a glance of memory behind,  
Obeys the stronger of the dual-mind,  
And presses on. The frosty missiles dare  
To pierce relentless through her homely wear ;  
But will, however strong, can ne'er prevail,  
When strength of muscle, worn, begins to fail ;  
And now she reels, she falters in the strife,  
*She is a Woman—struggling for her life !*  
And woman-like, her heart with self's at schism,  
This is no chance for Woman's heroism !  
When struggle is for self, she soon grows numb,  
For others, oh ! she never will succumb !

She is a Woman ! struggling all alone,  
She yields, she sinks—unknowing and unknown.

Where now was Waldo ? some one's query saith,—  
Laid down to sleep a frigid sleep for death ?  
No ! follow him ! he leaves the lantern light,  
And sallies dauntless in the grip of night,  
Turns many an angle by some barren crag,  
And conjures strength as some poor hunted stag,  
To nimbly leave the threatening scenes behind,  
And plunge precipitous against the wind.  
But night and all its missives scatter doubts,  
Around his hopes to learn his whereabouts ;  
Yet few, as well as he, knew every link  
That forms the chain, that binds the Neversink.

He wrestles on ; slow progress his reward,  
A happy hope his shield, resolve his sword ;  
Bends to the storm, snow-buried to the knee,  
Low shrubs, rough rocks, deal with him ruthlessly.  
Sudden, when hopes escape and fears ride on,  
When toil seems fruitless, all its prestige gone,  
There bursts before him near his hidden path,  
A glow of light ! that gleams through Borean wrath,  
Flames red and warm upon the snow-masked ground,  
Illumes the fence and shrubbery around,

Till Waldo stands aghast ! What need to tell  
He knows the homely scene about him well ?  
He calls aloud, and as he calls, the light  
Is gone again, and leaves the dreary night  
More black, more hideous than it seemed before,  
More allied to the fabled Stygian shore !

Then back upon his viewless way he sped,  
Another's pulse was beating by his tread ;  
And ne'er did knighthood at a tournament,  
Encounter foe so circumambient.  
Sure of the path he oft before had learned,  
Backed by the winds whose power for progress turned,  
The anguish of a Woman's soul surmised,  
And breathlessly he thus soliloquized.  
" Thanks to you, Nan ; oh, thanks to one and all,  
That lit my way, though still unheard my call,  
That grateful gleam—for I was bound to roam,"  
He shuddered ; " Ah, I nearly passed my home !"  
Blind to his course (the chasm might be his grave),  
Tossed over drifts as barques upon the wave,  
Recked not withal, but fell and rose again,  
A Phoenix born into the race of men !

Then as he hied in action and in thought  
To be a hero where the world sees not

And try for once a Woman's proudest lot,  
 His vigorous steps some low exotic caught ;  
 A ripple chill, more chilly than the night,  
 Benumbed his speech and fettered every might ;  
 Life in one moment of a life ! for there,  
 A form attired in a woman's wear,  
 Snow-laden mingled with her icy hair !  
 The power of speech was fled ; life could no story tell,  
 Yet Waldo knew his Mary—oh, too well !  
 Still o'er life's rugged path, the sad heart keeps,  
 The tender vine of fragrant gladness creeps,  
 The high heroic manhood in him stirs,  
 He kissed her cheek—'twas his as well as hers.  
 Fond nature quickens ! now her ebbing power  
     Reflows within her husband's brawny hold,  
     That lifts her from her hollow couch of cold,  
 As does the sun awake the drooping flower.

Upon the feeble throb within that breast,  
 He wailed the woe his own heart knew the best,  
 Invective on her God, of whom she taught,  
 ( Love brings us Sorrow—nothing else but Love ;  
 Both have the Christian's glorious future wrought,  
     For Love and Sorrow hinge the gates above ;  
 While Trust, free Trust, bids every one to hold,  
 Its sceptre, yielding peace and power untold !

Not yet these themes would Waldo deign to brook,  
His chilly limbs and colder heart-strings shook,  
And fluttered as he spoke :—" I want to ask  
Why did you undertake this fearful task,  
Of venturing forth alone this baleful night ?"  
Nor list'ning for an answer grasped her tight,  
Told how he saw, a little while ago,  
A sudden short-lived fulgence on the snow.  
Her power was spent, 'twas all that he could do,  
But with his arm tight swathing her, he grew  
More puissant as he bore against the prow,  
That swept upon them sharp and swift ; and now  
The growing task his boasted power steals,  
At every battling blast, he staggers, reels  
Before the viewless foe ; and then regains  
Himself in the affray, as Boreas deigns  
To lull ; but ah ! lulls at his Arctic source,  
And gathers strength to blow with greater force !  
Still, as an eagle triumphs in his prey,  
Death's would-be victim, Waldo bears away.  
The night still rails, the ireful wind still blows,  
Drifts form new hills and still it drifts and snows ;  
Still darkness casts a veil about the road,  
But Waldo struggles on beneath his load,  
Sometimes upon the bare-blown glebe with ease,  
Sometimes through drifts defiant to the knees ;

Sometimes he halts to catch a breath to speak,  
Or press the numb, the cold and hollow cheek.

But slowly on, he moved with labored stride,  
And as he chanced to turn his head, descried  
A light within a frosty window,—dim,  
As from a dying fire, but bright to him.  
He hastens on, the garden gate he seeks,  
But finds no gate; for in its wily freaks,  
The storm has drifted o'er the highest post,  
And all the fence he knew, is strangely lost!  
With cautious steps the hardened crust is crossed,  
The window passed (translucent with the frost),  
Before his doleful lot in labor done,  
He sees the light shine on his paragon—  
Sees that her life lies low. Such was his fear;  
And as he watched, he felt a starting tear  
Roll down for her as evening drops her dew;  
Her hair dishevelled, fluttered as it blew,  
Tangling itself like grass in blameless mirth,  
Before the sickle fells it to the earth.  
This Waldo saw; and only grieved the more,  
As tremulous, he oped the cabin door.

The children rubbed their heavy eyes from sleep,  
Sportive in innocence—born less to weep;



The father blind to all except his wife,  
Sees all in her he ever needs of life,  
Hastens to lay her stiff and senseless frame  
Before the fire, e'er Death should ask her name.  
They pressed about that form, that pallid mien,  
Half-living in a future unforeseen,  
Each heart becomes a tender trysting place,  
And joy and sorrow light and shade each face.  
Sometimes, to questions simple as the youth,  
The stricken father bowed the doleful truth,  
Lost from his vaunted ease of self-command,  
He chilled his forehead on her frigid hand,  
Clasped in his own, and wet with manly tears,—  
The first he wept since childhood's purer years.

The fire, its strength had prematurely spent—  
With less of prudence than of good intent—  
Until the back-log fell and burst in two,  
And blazed and crackled lustily anew.  
Was this to light the fluttering soul to rest,  
And warm the sorrow chilling every breast?  
Life's picture—all of life—was in that room,  
Our picture, wordling ask ye not of whom;  
Our picture;—in those flames that upward ride,  
The goodness of the Lord is typified;  
While all the forms aglow must represent

Our own misdeeds with one another blent,  
Whose shadows, consequent upon the wall,  
Are trials dark, that come by all to all.  
Thus, in the light, the objects and the shade,  
We see God's love, our sins, our woes portrayed.

Consonant with the sighing winds without,  
The lamentations of the mourners went  
In long roulades of harrowing hope and doubt,  
As past and future in a present blent.  
Behold a sturdy man—a Mountaineer,  
Impassive, hitherto, to moral fear,  
Dares not conceal for once a manly tear!  
While sorrow humbleth, it exalts the soul,  
And swayeth where the world cannot contról.  
Shall he not warm with tears, the hand once laid,  
Freely and warm in his,—she then a maid? .  
Oh voice of action, missive of the heart,  
Once warm for union, now grown cold to part!

Within that narrow circle—now the group,  
A brother, sister, see a father droop,  
Life seems a sort of future built of woe,  
And building now, a sad, sad long-ago!  
As Nannie sobs, Waldo in spirit waits  
In statued stillness by the unseen gates;

His head bows low ; beneath his crumpled hair,  
A wild-fixed eye betrays the wrestling there ;  
Aye ! there is something swelling in that heart,  
The bursting seed of Truth—we live to part.

Then wail ye winds and waft to mountain head,  
The premonition of the heavenward tread,—  
A Woman, ever womanly—lies dead !

Oh, then, as sinks a diver neath the wave,  
The treasure from a foundered ship to save,  
So Waldo sank beneath affliction's sea,  
To grasp her hopes of immortality.

Then, scan that field of Death's mysterious sleep,  
We glean no sheaves, our sickle fails to reap ;  
But pierce the veil that wraps the sacred theme,  
*And Life itself appears to be the dream,—*  
A dismal drag, a strange unconquering strife,  
*And Death becomes the waking into Life.*  
But ye who mourn may wail your wasted woes,  
If Death stands yet the greatest of your foes.

Oh simple hearted childhood, fall and weep,  
To see a Christian mother sleep that sleep,

For all you are, 'twas she who paid the price,  
The heroism of self-sacrifice.  
And this shall be the first in childhood's years,  
Of sorrows wept without a mother's tears.

**CANTO IV.**

“Prayers of thankful mourners here!”—KEBLE.

“The soul of music slumbers in the shell,  
Till waked and kindled by the master’s spell;  
And feeling hearts, touch them but rightly, pour  
A thousand melodies unheard before!”—ROGERS.

“Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven,  
This minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;  
This rueful conflict, the heart riven,  
With vain endeavor,  
And memory of earth’s bitter leaven,  
Effaced for ever.”—WORDSWORTH.

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;  
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”—SHAKESPEARE.

## CANTO FOURTH.

Now looms the long-ago. A thrice decade  
Has, somewhere, wondrous metamorphose made.  
To-day interprets yesterday's dark page,  
As some repainted sign, half-washed by age,  
Reveals the first inscription through the last,  
And opens out an ever-present past.

The cottage stands upon the mountain wold,  
Yet severed long from those it knew of old ;  
Many a winter storm has raged since then,  
Many a vernal leaf has sprung again,  
Many a summer's bland, refreshing breeze,  
Many an autumn change among the trees ;  
The mountains rear their heavenward heads the same,  
The rocky crags retell creation's fame,  
The valleys wind their wooded acres far,  
The lucid stream reflects the evening star ;  
Adown the rugged heights the road-way winds,  
About the giant oak the vine still binds,  
Atwixt the mossy banks in forest glade,  
Castalian, cool, the brooklet purls in shade.

Oft have the spreading elm, the twisted oak,  
Been humbled by the woodman's ruthless stroke ;  
Oft have the cutting winds, with frosty blast,  
To earth the pride of veneration cast.  
Many a picture that the future drew,  
Proved never to the sterling present, true :  
And now the honest facts relume anew !

Then what in this sequestered path of lore,  
Is really *new* for Clio's trump to sing ?  
*Age!* this is all that none have tried before,  
For change alone can be a constant thing.  
Then read the new. In yonder thriving town,—  
Thriving, aye ! though blessed with no renown,  
Stroll once upon its broad and shaded street,  
And study while I tell you whom we meet.  
A mingling troop of boon companions, young,  
Each heedless of the others' trend of tongue,  
Strives strenuous, to gain a chosen place,  
Within the would-be, unreserved embrace,  
Of one who stands amid the sportive throng,  
And in their strife discerns harmonious song.  
But oh ! his voice will falter when he speaks,  
No bloom lights up his lips and hollow cheeks,  
And in th' unconscious circle of a tear,  
There seems to be a life that is not here.



His hearing fails, and he forgets—but still  
His heart with childish innocence will fill,  
When from those florid lips his sense has caught,  
The stilling redolence of children's thought ;  
And those white locks, pure as yon mountain snow,—  
Sad fruit at last—that blossomed long ago !  
His furrowed face the silent truths unseal,  
As rings the secret age of trees reveal.  
He totters, bowed and bent upon his cane,  
“ Cut long ago,” he says “ by Waldo Wayne,  
From Mary's tomb, a narrow, humble spot,  
Still near the broken fence that hems the cot ;  
Where, on that bleak and bitter winter's day,  
We sadly drew the drifted snows away,  
And turned the frosty clod and laid her there,  
Where Christ alone, our sympathies could share.”

Go, stranger, learn—if you believe it not—  
The soul's real life is not a twisted plot ;  
The story of old Waldo's vigor hear,  
When Life and Love began their true career.  
A tear of eloquence rolls down his cheek,  
And every feature has a voice to speak.  
Oh ! Gentle Reader, would you dare to scorn,  
Emotion in the hearts of brawny men ?  
Was woman not of nobler graces born

To elevate and purify? Oh, then  
If men ought not to sympathize and feel,  
The sack-cloth and the ashes never wear,  
If men ought not to weep, and mourn, and kneel,  
'Twere wrong in woman's part to lift them there.

Solemn, yet cheerful, Waldo's heart is glad,—  
*Glad, because, the Lord hath made him sad.*  
High Heaven reproved him, but did not offend,  
Became his Sympathy, his Hope, his Friend.  
And he, who feels another's sorrow, knows  
Just where the sweetest flower of friendship grows ;  
And proves himself the truest, when his art  
Unlocks the recess of the sadder heart,  
Then kneels, and finds an entry, unobserved,  
To taste the cup from which his friend is served ;  
Then, steals by secrecy one seed of woe,  
And plants it in himself, that it may grow  
Forevermore a great and glorious tree,  
To lend the stricken world, its shade of sympathy ;  
For oh ! tis sad when others' sorrows rise,  
'Tis sad, and yet 'tis sweet, to sympathize !

Then come with him, on whom affliction smiled,  
And hear the story of his eldest child.  
He tells, " Like all the maidens coy and young,

Some one with her the chord of love had strung,  
 Noble a heart as ever shed love's beam,  
 Yet, restless, as a shifting prairie stream,  
 Without a chosen course upon the sand,  
 Swift in its flow toward future fields unplanned.  
 So I opposed the match, but woo they would,  
 I breathed content—for *Love is always good*,  
 If it be truly Love, and 'God is Love,'  
 And what *is* truly good, for good must prove.  
 Love is a feeling, not a mental sense,

Reason may sway the head, but not the heart ;  
 Affection is not slain by arguments,

And these are vain, if Love has got the start !  
 Oh ! Love is but a glorious giving, free  
 Outflowing of unselfish purity ;  
 Failing to recognize disparity,  
 In years, or circumstance, or social state,  
 And all that reason deems a counterweight.  
 Love is a giver, but can never know,

And never taste its own outpouring sweets,  
 'Tis all unconscious of its own rich flow,  
 It seems to reap what others seem to sow,—

Its signatures are all receipts.  
 No draught of Love, the thirst of Love can slake,  
 Love never meets, but strives to overtake,  
 And love of self, is all it can forsake !

Now this is Love ; and wholly this with Nan,  
 Twin passion rooted deeply in the man,  
 And they were wed ; linked with a holy loom,  
 The warp of life a bride, the woof a groom.  
 So, then, to weave the fabric strong, she made  
 Him ply again, his long-neglected trade,  
 And that, withal it might be beautified,  
 The texture with the lights of home she dyed.  
 He ruled, she ruled, both ruled without a strife,  
 Ruled, and were ruled in different schools of life."  
 Hers was the nobler ! 'tis a woman's art,  
 To furnish men with instincts of her heart,  
 That he may act them out,—this is his part.  
 When women seek *like men*, to rule and live,  
     They forfeit woman's rights, to gain a man's !  
 They lose their nobler soul's prerogative,  
 And trade their power of heart for strength of hands !  
*Let Woman's scorn be the usurper's sting,*  
*Her virtue be the monarch's signet ring,*  
*And then she rules, as Esther ruled the king !*

“ On yonder slope, near where the cattle browse,  
 And streams of sunlight through the elms carouse,  
 And dance and mingle on the portico ;  
 Where trilled through living leaves the breezes blow,  
 And twine the shrubs, and sweep the willows low,

Across the pebbled walk and flowered loam,—  
That is their cottage—nay it is their home.  
Hers now—my Nan's—hers, where her mother whil'd  
Away the hours of herself, the child  
Who stood, and blessed the parson when he smiled !  
Thou seest the fresh vine trailing through the leaves ?  
That heritage, her memory receives :  
Thou seest the trunk to which the vine has clung ?  
That was a sapling when my wife was young :  
Thou seest the children sporting, 'neath them there ?  
A blue-eyed boy, a girl with golden hair ?  
I am the grandsire of that youthful pair !  
My Mary's girlish dream at last is true !  
Her blasted vine now yields her seed its place,  
The sapling, generous, now supports her grace :  
Strange things I tell—for time, strange things will do,  
And that dream-picture which my Mary drew,  
Means Nannie, and the 'little boy of two !'  
Boy then, of two, two years of life's new range,  
Man now, of two—two children—what a change !  
And one, himself, of two, for Love had done  
The rites that make of two, a perfect one."

"Then, longer, sire," we ask, "your powers employ,  
To tell the story of your blue-eyed boy."  
"Ah !" he replies, "his tale is stranger still,

More fully fraught with God's o'erruling will.  
Strange, strange indeed, seems stranger now to me,  
Wild with his whims, he longed to sail the sea,  
Argued the ill, with sophistries profuse,  
Of moping here a grave, estranged recluse ;  
And while the reason's waves of argument  
Upon my spirit's shores their shudders sent,  
He stole away—he slew a parent's pride,  
And robbed himself of love and home, beside !  
For twelve months full, hope wrestled with despair,  
Good news, nor rumored ill, relieved our care,  
Till, as the struggling sun-beam shimmers sheen,  
To wipe away the tempest's sullen mien,  
There came a brief ; fruition ruled my breast,  
Another year, the young bird found his nest.

“Cast from a wreck, while yet estranged from God,  
A barren isle, lone and forlorn he trod,  
Culled well the ocean-pearls to blight the while,  
Yet would have bartered these for friendship's smile.  
(O Solitude ! thy presence never lends,  
Its charm to him who slights the Friend of Friends !)

“Ere long the guided winds renewed their breath,  
And sent a sail to rescue him from death.  
Sick of the sea, he longed for home once more,

But he was drifted to an Eastern shore,  
 Where commerce found in him a willing one,  
 And Worldly-Wealth soon claimed him as her son.

“One Sabbath day (he knew no Sabbath rule),  
 He wandered, curious, to a mission-school,  
 Deaf to the language, consciously he guessed  
 The thirst for knowledge in each heathen breast,  
 And mutely said, ‘These visages uncouth,  
 Evince the heart’s desire *to weigh* the Truth,  
 Free in their option, then, their faith to turn,  
 (*Already wise are they that seek to learn.*)  
 O ignorance of Truth! my boasted thrall,  
 Sinks me, the lowest heathen of them all!’

“From that good hour, he traced life’s twisted chain,  
 Saw Providence at home and on the main,  
 And when he failed some tangle to untwine,  
 Saw that the human could not be divine;  
 Could creatures their Creator’s course foresee,  
 ’Twould prove indeed, a monstrous parity!

“My race of life will soon be run, perchance;  
 Behold! I leave a world’s inheritance,  
 In him who found the pearl of Trust abroad,  
 And now, ’neath yonder spire proclaims his God!

Oh ! how the seeds, my wife once sowed, have strewed  
My rugged way with flowers of gratitude !  
And how a thirst for recklessness and lust,  
Will seize unconsciously the cup of Trust !”

One summer afternoon I chanced to stroll,  
I, and the simply poesy of my soul,  
To bide my sweetest tryst, the commonplace to flee,  
And fuse my soul with Nature’s sympathy ;  
I trod the path adown the glen cascade,  
I marked the wrestling of the sun-flecked shade,  
I stepped from rock to rock amid the foam,  
And Nature seemed my temple and my home,  
I sat me down my human weal to woo,  
As any other child of earth might do ;  
But there stood BEAUTY in her holiness,  
Pure, in a modest plentitude of dress,  
And as she grew the more, I seemed the less,  
Until I thought to mount,—could I but dare!—  
The awful cliffs, sublime, and sacred stair,  
That seemed itself earth’s ever-lifting prayer,  
Breathed in that hallowed atmosphere of gray  
That shamed my selfish littleness away !  
Then, waters told me, in their tuneful run,  
That Nature and my spirit chord as one ;  
For often in their mystic harmony,



(Divinely struck it almost seems to me),  
I seem to hear what I can never tell,  
I seem to read the undefinable,  
And deign to call the feeling—Poetry !

While Nature thus, her highest soul transfused  
Into my veins, I muttered as I mused,  
“ How poor are they—their poverty how low,  
Who ne'er the wealth of Nature's pictures know !  
'Tis hard for man to want, while Nature lives,  
'Tis piteous not to want the good she gives !  
Behold ! her lights and shadows, skies and sod—  
O changeful robe of an unchanging God !”

While pond'ring thus, the things that spoke sublime,  
Dispersing all my consciousness of time,  
I turned—and lo ! mine eyes, astonished, meet,  
Just near the boulder by my mossy seat,  
An aged man, whose hair long past its gray  
Seemed as the tomb o'er vigors in decay,  
He started, too, surprised to find me there—  
A new intruder in his sacred lair,  
But bade me sit aside him on the stone,  
Where oft alone he found him least alone.  
O Solitude ! thou art not solitude,  
When Nature's sympathies through thee are wooed,

When all thy charms most socially reveal,  
 To those who know far less than they can feel,  
 What lies behind the great Creator's seal.

Then when I spoke those themes to Waldo Wayne,  
 He told me, Nature was his fairest fane ;  
 "I often feel," he said, "yon heavenly cope,  
 These scenes, all form my soul's great telescope,  
 Which, when through her with mystic powers I peer,  
 My view is lost to those about me here,  
 And all that's hid in life seems standing near.  
 Oh, BEAUTY! ever lifting in surprise,  
 Thy better part is never seen by eyes ;  
 The cliffs bear up the homage of the sod,  
 The waters praise when they reflect—O God!"  
 Then briefly, thus, he starts to tell me o'er,  
 The story that I knew as well before.

"My dear wife sleeps, I joy because I grieve,  
 Affliction only drove me to believe.  
 Taught me to seek my Maker's just reprieve,  
 Trust's all unconquered forces to deploy,  
 Hope's high aspiring honors to enjoy!  
 Offered to me as an eternal lot,  
 The same reward that crowns the Huguenot.  
 Oh! what a simple thing it is to trust,

To see the interlinking of events,  
 To feel the better rule of Providence,  
 To know the foolish poverty of dust !  
 Thank God for giving such a wife to me,  
 So fond, so noble, pure and womanly !  
 And this, her rule, was born of sympathy.  
*When discontent and thoughts of self allure,*  
*Then, sacrifice its holy flame must start ;*  
*For healing others is thine only cure,*  
*And self can never live within the heart !*

“She sleeps! she lives! lives by the powers of Love,  
 That rule on earth for greater things above,  
 That every scene in life the best shall prove !  
 Hard, hard, it was, in that cold hour to part,  
 Yet God ordained my grief to melt my heart ;  
 Then life agone, was clouds and storms I knew,  
 Death broke the mist, the sun of Love streamed through,  
 Showed me on Sorrow’s shower, I might possess,  
 A seven-hued bow, of promised happiness ;  
 Whose blended dyes, of Love, and Peace, and Trust,  
 And Faith and Hope, with Charity and Joy,  
 So far outshone the world’s poor vaunted lust,  
 With tints unsullied by unchaste alloy,—  
 I was entranced : Oh ! how its powers sustain !  
 Thank God, that arch was built for Waldo Wayne !

"I really knew the Truth, yet felt not Trust,  
 Its power to cheer the soul of mortal dust.  
 I was a lamp (take heed dark world and learn),  
 Whose oil of dormant truth would never burn,  
 Until the heart-wick touched by fires of grief,  
 Flamed forth into the ardor of belief.  
 O, light of Trust! that warned me where I trod,  
 Burn on, to light my fellow-men to God! •

"I tell thee then, adversity reveals,  
 Exactly what prosperity conceals,—  
 The workings of the Lord's eternal plan,  
 Drawn for the future betterment of man.  
 Our blessings are our freedom—this is all,  
 Our freedom from the woes which *might* befall,  
 Which daily prove to be a neighbor's thrall,  
 And through our narrow circle fling their pall.

*"Know then, when living seems a retrogade,  
 When cords of fate thy wilful ways entwine,  
 That Providence a better course has laid,  
 And better ends provided thee, than thine!  
 If thousands hasten on, and pass thee by,  
 Filled with success, though thou canst not see why,  
 Oh! thousands more in deeper poverty,  
 Are looking up, and stretching forth to thee!*

Then turn and lend thy grateful hand to them,  
And teach them all to touch the Garment Hem.  
Success to thee, might only pamper lust,  
While trials are thy solid food of trust.  
TRUST! trust thy God, for Love is true, and then,  
Trust, and be trusted by thy fellow-men;  
Live! this is Life—for LIFE and LOVE are one;  
PEACE! evermore the gracious benison!"

THE END.

